

for working-age Americans fell by about \$2,400.

"Americans work the longest hours of any people in the industrialized world," the senator said. "We even surpassed Japan."

But despite all that hard work—despite explosive improvements in technology and increased worker productivity—the middle class is struggling, losing ground and there's a very real possibility that the next generation of workers will have a lower standard of living than today's.

The letters to Senator Sanders offer a glimpse into the real lives of ordinary people in an economic environment that was sculpted to favor the very rich. One of the letters was from a woman in central Vermont who said she and her husband are in their mid-30s, are college-educated and have two young children.

"We are feeling distraught," she said, "that we may never 'get ahead' but will always be pedaling to just keep up."

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, a day or so ago, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, now numbering close to 800, are heartbreaking and touching. It is not just filling the tank; these high energy prices touch every aspect of our lives—family time, food prices, work commutes, the list goes on and on. Many Idahoans have taken efforts to cut back on the niceties to accommodate the necessities, but now far too many face the choice of which necessity to ignore—gas or food, job or family. For years, Congress has unsuccessfully grappled with a national energy policy; now we are at a point where decisions must be made, compromises must be negotiated if we are to finally be forward-thinking. This isn't only a question of what we are handing future generations; it's affecting families right here, right now. It is not just Idahoans. It is an issue that touches the live of every single American, no matter their socioeconomic status.

In an effort to seek solutions rather than focus only on the trouble, I have also asked Idahoans to share how they want Congress to resolve it, and the suggestions are voluminous and wide-ranging. Some start simply with conservation efforts, something that I have long supported, while others encourage increased offshore oil drilling and increased domestic production, more sustainable alternative and renewable energy sources, stronger support for nuclear energy options and more efficient transportation options. Nearly all have expressed concerns for not just their future, but for the future of their children and grandchildren. And they are adamant about Congress moving beyond half-truths and partisan politics to find solutions. While I may differ in my opinions on some suggestions, I am thrilled that so many have taken time to share their thoughts with me. Some have shared research, videos and book rec-

ommendations. To respect that effort, I plan on submitting every e-mail sent to me through energyprices@crapo.senate.gov to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. And to keep attention on this matter, I will be submitting them a few at a time every day until every one has been submitted. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention. I plan to continue working to find other ways to bring these stories to the attention of my colleagues in Congress. Today, I am starting this process with the following comments from Idahoans.

I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD comments from Idahoans.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO, I am very interested in the debate concerning rude oil and energy prices. I am a wheat farmer by profession and have been excited about the increased wheat prices, however, all of the input costs have significantly increased due to the fact that all inputs have either direct or indirect links to the price of crude oil. Freight costs have significantly increased across the board. Manufacturing costs for steel have soared, partly due to the energy costs. Pivot prices have increased by 20% this year and are expected to significantly increase next year also. Fertilizer prices, which were already unrealistically high last year have tripled from last year's prices. Although the price of wheat will likely be more than commensurate with the input costs this year, if commodity prices fall before the decline of input prices, (including and especially energy prices) farmers throughout the country will be in serious trouble.

In addition to the difficulties associated with farm input prices, my family's household income has not increased in proportion to the costs of household goods such as food, clothing, and family items. The relief check from the government will not come close to compensating for increased pricing, and will also decrease the value of the dollar and hence cause more inflated pricing, as well as increase our national debt.

Most Americans would agree that caring for our environment is important, however, a relatively small group of radical environmentalists have been using their screaming lobby to set policies which are extremely detrimental to the economy as well as the environment. How is it that oil drilled from the Middle East and freighted across the ocean is less harmful to "mother earth" than drilling in a single square mile in Alaska? I am adamantly opposed to the idea that we should be dependant upon the Middle East for oil when we have enough to last for at least one hundred years in reserve here in the United States. We are likely to have alternative technology to decrease our demand upon oil and most likely oil will be obsolete as an energy source within less than 50 years. Please listen to the less vocal majority who are pleading for drastically decreasing the restrictions and regulations on drilling and refining our domestic oil.

Sincerely,

LLOYD WARD.

DEAR MIKE CRAPO, We live on Robie Creek out side of Boise. My husband commutes to Nampa 2 days a week to work. We are also Ushers for Boise State University and have to commute to Boise for work. With the increase in Gas Price, our fuel costs have risen 148.00 in the past three months. It was al-

ready way to expensive. We are in our 70's so this is a hardship for us.

John McCain stating he will not drill in Alaska makes me so mad. I live next door to a lady who spent years in Barrow and the North Slope of Alaska. She said drilling would not hurt anything because there is nothing there. I have suggested Mr. McCain make a trip and check this out personally instead of listening to the environmentalist who has put us in this position in the first place along with the Socialist who want this country destroyed. I also think it is a shame to listen to the Stupid people who are costing us Billions to prevent global warming. The last I knew, God was in-charge and has been thru thousands of years of climate change. Who is going to pay back the tax payers when this is proven to be a political sham?

It would be so refreshing if we the people could ever get the truth about anything and have all of the agenda bleeped out.

BESS, Boise.

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO: We have noticed a big difference in prices in the past year. Instead of taking two vehicles to work five days a week, my husband and I have traveled together this past year to save on the gas. We leave our home in Firth, (our work hours are different), and he drops me off at work and travels to the other side of Idaho Falls to get to his job. I stay at work during the lunch hour and an extra hour after work until he comes to pick me up at night.

It used to cost us \$320.00 a month one year ago taking two vehicles to work. Now with one vehicle we are spending a minimum of \$340.00 just to get to work.

We also have the added concern of my husband's elderly parents. They will need our help more and we try to go see them once a month. We are spending \$100.00 per trip to get from Firth to Wendell and back.

1. Why isn't anyone concerned about the high oil consumption of container ships that bring goods from other countries?

2. Why are we allowing China and other countries to drill off of our shores when we can't drill off Florida?

3. What about all the wells that were drilled and capped in the Western Wyoming area and other areas of the U.S.?

4. Why are we not pushing harder for nuclear energy and other options and also expanding refinery capacity that could free us from dependence on other nations? They have us under their thumbs.

5. Why are the minority environmentalists controlling so much of our lives? We believe they are not being realistic and subjecting us to other nations' whims. Global warming, it snowed here last week, second week of June. Where is the global warming? There is more global warming controlled by the sun and not man. The earth has always had ups and downs in its weather patterns. Why doesn't anybody ask an environmentalist what they live in, what they wear and how they get to their protests? It seems they are protesting everything they use.

Thank you for work you are doing and asking for our opinions.

MICHAEL AND SUSAN, Firth.

DEAR SENATOR CRAPO, thank your for giving me the opportunity to write to you on this issue and also for your efforts on our behalf.

I have a PhD in Aerospace Engineering and more than thirty years experience.

I can only address the engineering aspects of this question, not the political aspects, though I am afraid that the problem is largely a political and psychological one, not a technical one.

The technological facts are these: We can have energy independence and a 75% reduction in air pollution at the same time and it